(i) Provision of support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for Operation and Maintenance of existing Village Public Telephones (VPTs), installation of VPTs in the remaining villages, provision of additional Rural Community Phones (RCPs) in villages with population exceeding 2000, replacement of Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) based VPTs and up-gradation of 35,000 VPTs to Public Telecom and Info Centres (PTICs) for providing both voice and data access.

(ii) Provision of telephone on demand with support from Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund in 1,685 commercially unviable SDCAs out of total 2,647 SDCAs in the country by January, 2006. This will cover a significant part of the rural areas of the country.

(iii) Large scale deployment of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) system including provision of at least one Base Transceiving Station (BTS) in each Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA).

(iv) Opening of new exchanges at places which have a minimum demand of 150 within 5 Kms radius of the proposed exchange site.

(b) and (c) Under 'Bharat Nirman' Scheme Village Public Telephones (VPTs) will be provided in 66,822 unconnected villages progressively by November, 2007 with an outlay of Rs. 451 crore. This excludes villages which are disputed, inaccessible or having population less than 100. These 66,822 villages also include 14,183 villages in remote and far flung areas which are to be provided by Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPTs).

(d) and (e) 248 applicants are in the waiting list for new telephone connections at Buxor as on 31-03-2005. The work of capacity expansion of Buxor exchange by 2,000 lines is under progress and the above waiting list is likely to be cleared by December, 2005.

Pending applications for Excel connections

†3161. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for Excel connections pending with B.S.N.L. all over the country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is a fact that 11,000 applications for Excel connections and 15,000 applications for telephone connections are pending in Bulandshaher district of Uttar Pradesh; and

(c) by when the waiting list would be cleared and the action being taken by Government to avoid pendency of application in large number?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The number of applications pending for prepaid cellular connections (Excel) with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) all over the country is 13,22,172.

(b) No application for Excel is pending in Bulandshaher district of Uttar Pradesh. However, there are 9,724 registrants in waiting list for Land Line connections in the district.

(c) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is in the process of augmenting the mobile network of Uttar Pradesh by 1.2 Million lines and to provide necessary infrastructure items such as cable, Wireless Local Loop systems to meet the landline demand. Existing waiting list is likely to be cleared during the current financial year.

Speed Post facility in U.P. and Chhattisgarh

†3162. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain district headquarters in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are still deprived of the speed post facility;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for non-availability of speed post facility; and

(d) by when speed post facility would be made available in all these district headquarters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. All the 70 Districts in Uttar Pradesh and 16 districts of Chhattisgarh have been covered under Speed Post facility, either by National/State Speed Post Centres or by extension counters.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.